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EFFECTS OF FREQUENCY OF WRITING AND INTENSITY OF TEACHER EVALUATION UPON HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE IN WRITTEN COMPOSITION.

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THE PROBLEM OF THIS RESEARCH WAS TO INVESTIGATE THE EFFECTS OF FREQUENCY OF WRITING AND INTENSITY OF TEACHER EVALUATION UPON PERFORMANCE BY STUDENTS OF VARYING ABILITIES. THE STUDY WAS DESIGNED TO INCLUDE EIGHT 10TH-GRADE CLASSES WITH TWO TEACHERS FOLLOWING FOUR DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO INTENSITY OF TEACHER EVALUATION AND FREQUENCY OF WRITING. THESE APPROACHES WERE--(1) ONE GROUP OF STUDENTS WROTE INFREQUENTLY, WITH THEIR COMPOSITIONS RECEIVING MODERATE EVALUATION, (2) A SECOND GROUP WROTE FREQUENTLY, WITH COMPOSITIONS RECEIVING MODERATE EVALUATION, (3) A THIRD GROUP WROTE INFREQUENTLY, BUT WITH COMPOSITIONS RECEIVING INTENSIVE EVALUATION, AND (4) A FOURTH GROUP WROTE FREQUENTLY, WITH COMPOSITIONS RECEIVING INTENSIVE EVALUATION. THE STUDY WAS CONDUCTED IN TWO COMPARABLE HIGH SCHOOLS, WITH A TEACHER IN EACH SCHOOL TEACHING FOUR MATCHED GROUPS OF STUDENTS. STEP ESSAY AND STEP WRITING TESTS WERE ADMINISTERED AS PRE- AND POST-TESTS. BOTH FORMS OF THE ESSAY TESTS WERE RATED BY THREE EXPERIENCED RATERS. A COMPLEX FACTORIAL DESIGN SERVED AS A MODEL FOR THE ANALYSIS. NO MAIN EFFECTS OR INTERACTIONS WERE SIGNIFICANT AT THE .05 LEVEL. NEITHER COVARIATE WAS SIGNIFICANT AT THE .05 LEVEL FOR THE ESSAY TESTS, BUT AN ANALYSIS OF THE STEP WRITING TEST DATA REVEALED THAT THE TEACHER-SCHOOL COVARIATE WAS SIGNIFICANT. IN LIGHT OF THE FACT THAT NO SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES WERE FOUND TO BE ASSOCIATED WITH INTENSITY OF EVALUATION OR FREQUENCY OF WRITING, THE NEED FOR FURTHER RESEARCH IS STRESSED. (JC)

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EFFECTS OF FREQUENCY OF WRITING AND INTENSITY OF TEACHER EVALUATION UPON HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE IN WRITTEN COMPOSITION

Cooperative Research Project No. 1523

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Tallahassee, Florida

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PREFACE

Both the project director and the principal investigator in this study have long questioned basic assumptions concerning the teaching of written composition. The research herein reported is a direct outgrowth of classroom experiences of project personnel.

Begun as graduate research at The Florida State University, this study was made possible under a grant, Project Number 1523, from the Cooperative Research Program, United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Office of Education. In addition to this main grant, analyses of the data reported herein were partially supported by Grant Number 17467, from the National Science Foundation to The Florida State University.

The investigators gratefully acknowledge their indebtedness to the grantors who directly and indirectly made this research possible. In addition, the researchers wish to express appreciation to the many individuals who have made contributions to this study by means of their interest, counsel, and time.

Specifically, the investigators wish to recognize the following individuals and agencies for their cooperation in organizing, conducting, and reporting the study: Dr. Russell P. Kropp, Dr. F. J. King, Dr. Howard W. Stoker, Dr. Ernest W. Cason, Dr. Kellogg W. Hunt, and Dr. Mildred E. Swearingen, all of The Florida State University; the administrative, supervisory, and instructional staffs of the Pinellas County school system; and principals, guidance counselors, and other staff members of the high schools involved in the study. Especially do the investigators wish to express their gratitude to the two teachers who participated in the study.

Grateful appreciation is also extended to those many persons who rendered invaluable assistance at various stages of the study in serving as statistical consultants, raters of compositions, technical advisers on IBM programming, consultants in research and testing, and typists.

The cooperative efforts of all who have assisted in making this research possible are gratefully acknowledged by the investigators.

Dwight L. Burton

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The early days of American education found Latin Grammar Schools emphasizing Latin and Greek. English and mathematics were not added to the curriculum of American schools until after 1751, with the development of the academy. Composition is clearly specified in course descriptions of private schools which began to appear after the Revolution. At one of them, a young ladies' school in New Haven, the Reverend William Woodbridge, a senior at Yale, taught "grammar, geography, composition, and rhetoric."[1]

Other references to the inclusion of composition may be found in course descriptions for the early high schools, the first of which, the English Classical School, appeared in Boston in 1821. This particular school offered studies in composition for all three classes. One of the qualifications for admission to the English Classical School was that the candidate "be well acquainted with reading, writing, English grammar in all its branches, and arithmetic as far as simple proportion."[1] The course in composition at the English Classical School placed emphasis on reading from approved authors and then writing literary criticisms of their "language, grammar, and style . . . their errors and beauties. . . ."[2]

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[1] Elmer Ellsworth Brown, The Making of Our Middle Schools (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1910), p. 253.

With the passing of the century, certain forces began to kindle interest in the teaching of composition. One factor was concern on the part of educators. In 1868 the Massachusetts Teacher contained an editorial commenting that "both teachers and members of the School Committee lament that so little is being done in our schools to prepare our pupils to express their own thoughts upon paper."[3] Another influence appeared as colleges began using entrance requirements and examinations to exert pressure on high schools. Until the time of the Civil War, colleges had required the following subjects for admission to the regular course: Latin, Greek, arithmetic, geography, English grammar, algebra, geometry, and ancient history. Gradually new subjects were added, and in 1870 Princeton listed English composition as one of the required subjects.[4] Still another factor contributing to the new emphasis on composition was the growing popularity of the public high school. With the famous Kalamazoo case of 1872 and the consequent changes in curriculum, English became an established part of the high school program.

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[1] John Franklin Brown, The American High School (New York: Macmillan Co., 1917), p. 28.

[2] Edna Hays, College Entrance Requirements in English: Their Effects on the High Schools (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1936), p. 2.

[3] Ibid., p. 12.

[4] John Franklin Brown, p. 371.

Thus, although early high schools had included composition along with elocution, it was apparently not until after 1880 that students received any real guidance in their writing. Early concerns were primarily spelling and punctuation, with some suggestions given for achieving simplicity of style. During the first decade of the new century, authorities such as Professors Barrett Wendell and F. N. Scott recommended practice in preference to theory and placed emphasis on structure of thought.[1]

The Hosic report of 1917 contained an evaluation of the composition program which had evolved. The formal approach to composition teaching through grammatical analysis received criticism from the Committee on Reorganization of the Curriculum. The committee felt that the aims of the English course should include proficiency in the writing of letters and paragraphs, the outlining of lectures or literature selections, the expanding of outlines, the planning and working out of reports, and, for those with ability, the writing of imaginative selections.[1]

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[1] George R. Carpenter, Franklin T. Baker, and Fred N. Scott, The Teaching of English in the Elementary and the Secondary School (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1924), p. 219.

Teaching of Composition Today

Essential to the teaching of written expression today is an understanding of the term composition, of instructional goals and procedures, and of the means for evaluation of the final product. Written composition, which may be defined as an arrangement and relation in writing of that which is experienced, read, or imagined, is first of all intended for communication. It does, as LaBrant points out, require a combination of abilities--talking, making sentences, reading, forming letters, spelling, and punctuating.[2] As is emphasized in the English Language Arts, written composition presents greater problems than oral because of the lack of intonation, gesture and facial expression as aids in interpretation.[3]

Generally speaking, teachers seem to be confused as to instructional goals. There is evidence of this confusion in the disagreement of teachers on evaluation of themes. In addition to disagreeing on the actual grade a composition merits, teachers seem to have difficulty in reaching consensus on desired outcomes. Most curriculum guides list as specific aims in composition the improvement of mechanical skills and the strengthening of the student's ability to organize materials logically. Even with these guidelines there is the problem of which should receive more weight--the neatly-written paper with its mechanical correctness, the clear-cut communication with its logical organization, or the thought-provoking composition with its significant ideas.

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[1] United States Bureau of Education, Reorganization of English in Secondary Schools, Bulletin No. 2, compiled by James Fleming Hosic (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1917), p. 31.

[2] Lou LaBrant, "Writing, Most Difficult of the Language Arts," National Education Journal, XLVII (March, 1958), 189.

[3] The Commission on the English Curriculum, The English Language Arts (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1952), p. 319.

Another area of confusion seems to be that of how the evaluation should be accomplished. Among the techniques used are the following: individual conferences, pupil self-appraisal, group evaluations, teacher judgment, comparison of themes with those in rating scales, and standardized tests. Most authorities agree that the particular method of evaluation to be used depends upon the purpose of the composition, but failure by teachers to agree upon basic criteria makes even more difficult the problem of measuring achievement in written expression.

Writers in professional journals have increasingly insisted that those who instruct in the field of writing must themselves understand the process of writing. Teachers who feel inadequately qualified to teach composition can find help provided through institutes, workshops, inservice programs, and professional literature. Recent workshop courses sponsored by the College Entrance Examination Board's Commission on English have operated on two basic premises:

(1) that teachers who themselves have experienced the writing process will have greater understanding, make more effective criticisms of student writing, and secure better results and (2) that composition is not a mere practical skill but is a means of organizing experience and effectively and precisely recounting ideas.[1]

Teachers of composition need not only an understanding of the writing process but also a clearly defined concept of just what constitutes good teaching of composition. In her article on the teaching of composition, Helen Olson includes the following definition:

> Good teaching of written composition is that teaching which induces each student to make the writing he does, in school and out of school, idea-centered, clear, logically developed, and individual in style--in accordance with his innate ability and the level of maturity at which he is working.[2]

She stresses further that good teaching of composition emphasizes to the student the importance of learning to write, includes wide reading and discussion of that reading, and involves careful teaching of fundamental skills and procedures. Noting that good teaching of composition requires careful evaluation of papers written, she reports that many teachers have discovered that planning even one conference a semester with each student produces remarkable growth in writing effectiveness. She concludes that with good teaching it is possible for students to become more effective in writing.[1]

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[1] Albert R. Kitzhaber, "New Perspectives on Teaching Composition," College English, XXIII (March, 1962), 441.

[2] Helen F. Olson, "What Is Good Teaching of Written Composition?" The English Journal, L (April, 1961), 238.

With the passing of two centuries, written composition has firmly established itself as a part of the curriculum in English in American secondary schools. However, as already implied, certain confusions still exist as to the teaching of composition. Although the Hosic report tended to encourage the use of informal and varied types of assignments, there has been continued emphasis on the grammatical approach to composition instruction, the approach of most textbooks which are used as sources for writing activities. In spite of the fact that composition instruction has been accorded a place in the language arts program, there is still much study and research needed before agreement can be reached concerning the most effective procedures in teaching written expression.

Need for the Study

A recent article in a popular magazine contained the denunciation: "Writing is the disgrace of American education."[2] While such a statement may shock the majority of readers, inadequacies to be found in the written expression of the general public in America come as no surprise to many persons, particularly to teachers. Teachers of English have long been aware of the deficiencies exhibited in written expression by their students. Mersand relates that the early 1900's found that such authorities as Percival Chubb and Sterling Leonard complained students were not learning to write effectively.[1] More recently LaBrant typified contemporary criticism by stating that there is "unquestionable evidence that we are not doing the job of teaching writing as we should be . . . ."[2] It is her feeling that many students arrive in college without the essential experience of planning and carrying out the main steps in writing a paper.

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[1] Ibid., pp. 238-245.

[2] George B. Leonard, Jr., "Why Johnny Can't Write," Look, XXV (June 20, 1961), 103.

There is no difficulty encountered in obtaining evidence of this need for better writing. Employers testify that secretaries and sales personnel are ineffective in writing letters or reports. College instructors find that freshman composition courses must provide remedial instruction. A survey conducted by Mersand found business executives, Civil Service administrators, college personnel, education editors, members of the legal profession, magazine editors, and newspaper editors making their strongest recommendations for improvement in the area of written composition.[3]

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[1] Joseph Mersand, "What Has Happened to Written Composition?" The English Journal, L (April, 1961), 231.

[2] Lou LaBrant, "Writing and Structure," Education, LXXVI (April, 1956), 468.

[3] Joseph Mersand, Attitudes Toward English Teaching (New York: Chilton Company, 1961), pp. 342-344.

Professional journals and textbooks contain many suggestions for strengthening the teaching of composition. These suggestions include: a lighter load for English teachers, more systematic teaching of composition, more advance planning by both student and teacher, closer cooperation on the part of teachers in all subject fields, more effective means of motivation, and greater emphasis on the mutual dependence of the writing and thinking processes. Among these suggestions for improvement of written expression two assumptions occur rather frequently. Basic to most of these proposed plans or techniques are the hypotheses that student writing improves almost automatically (1) if the student writes frequently and (2) if the teacher carefully evaluates each student composition.

The assumption that written composition can be taught more effectively through frequent writing experiences and careful evaluations is basic to recent recommendations concerning teacher load. Resolutions of the National Council of Teachers of English call for a maximum load of four classes and not over twenty-five students in a class for the English teacher. In The American High School Today[1] and in Education in the Junior High School Years,[2] Conant recommends heavy emphasis on the teaching of composition, with English teachers responsible for no more than 100 pupils.

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[1] James B. Conant, The American High School Today (New York: McGraw Hill, 1959), p. 51.

[2] James B. Conant, Education in the Junior High School Years (Princeton: Educational Testing Service, 1960), p. 34.

The question of relationship between writing practice and gains in effectiveness needs exploration. In its 1961 report on the profession, the National Council of Teachers of English acknowledges there is consensus that "a person learns to write by writing" and ". : . that someone must read that writing, react to it, and make suggestions for improvement."[1] Indicating most authorities agree that students need to write at least one theme each week, the report refers to the recommendations included in Dusel's California study. In this study, 430 teachers and educators recommended 150 words per week for freshmen and 350 words per week for seniors, with each pupil averaging 250 words each week.[2]

Closely related to this problem of how frequently students should write compositions is the question of how intensively the teacher should evaluate students' compositions. Some teachers contend they should mark every error and include comments on organization and content. Others are of the opinion that this detailed correction and commenting is unnecessary and that the teacher may more effectively comment on the composition as a whole or select for emphasis only specific items which the student is studying or reviewing at the moment. Still others suggest that in preference to teacher marking or commenting, there should be conferences with the student, evaluation by student committees, or self-evaluation by the student.

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[1] National Council of Teachers of English, The National Interest and the Teaching of English, A Report on the Status of the Profession (Champaign, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English, 1961), p. 92.

[2] Ibid.

Most teachers claim that the reason students are not given more frequent writing assignments is the problem of handling the paper load. Dusel, who regards effective marking of papers as that which teaches writing and thinking, found that the 250-word paper requires, on the average, 8.6 minutes of the teacher's time.[1] For 150 papers this would require 21.5 hours of grading time per week, in addition to all other responsibilities of the teacher.

Very little is actually known concerning the relationship of student gains in writing effectiveness to either frequent or infrequent practice or to intensive or moderate evaluation. Another factor which needs investigation and one which seems to have been ignored to a great extent is that of the ability of the student. Who benefits the most from frequent practice or from careful teacher evaluation--the slow, the average, or the superior student? Do students with varying abilities benefit equally?

Of the many unanswered questions concerning improvement of composition teaching, the ones of particular interest to this writer are those concerning frequency of writing, intensity of teacher evaluation, and the effects upon students of varying abilities. Thus the researcher studied high school students' performance in written composition for answers to the following questions:

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[1] William J. Dusel, "Determining an Efficient Teaching Load in English," Illinois English Bulletin, XLIII (October, 1955), 13.

1. Can differences be associated with intensity of teacher evaluation?
2. Can differences be associated with frequency of writing?
3. Can differences be associated with level of pupil ability?
4. Is there significant interaction between intensity of evaluation and frequency of writing?
5. Is there significant interaction between intensity of evaluation and ability level?
6. Is there significant interaction between frequency of writing and ability level?
7. Is there significant interaction among intensity of evaluation, frequency of writing, and ability level?
8. Are there significant differences which can be associated with teacher and school?
9. Are there significant differences which can be associated with the student's sex?

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

Although professional journals contain a wealth of material describing various methods of teaching written composition, few of the studies described are designed for actual research. James R. Squire, executive secretary of the National Council of Teachers of English, has underscored this dearth of research by pointing out that the field of educational research contains approximately six or seven times as much research on reading as on all of the aspects of written composition.[1]

Most of the literature concerned with the teaching of written composition tends toward the philosophical or theoretical. Various procedures are described, but in very few of these studies have outcomes been tested and results analyzed objectively. This scarcity of significant studies has resulted largely because one of the major problems encountered by researchers in composition, or in any area of the language arts, is that of setting up and maintaining controls.

Recently in summarizing research related to the English language arts at the secondary level, Ingrid Strom indicates the difficulties of setting up controlled studies:

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[1] Leonard, Look, XXV (June 20, 1961), 111.

> In evaluating the outcomes of instruction in the English language arts, the investigator has been faced with the problem of controlling variations in interest, sex, intelligence, chronological age, mental age, academic standing, race or nationality, socio-economic status, administrative devices for grouping students, and the climate of the school and the community. In an attempt to evaluate behavioral changes brought about in students as a result of instruction in English, researchers have carried out numerous normative surveys but few significant developmental and experimental studies.[1]

In spite of the problems involved in setting up research studies in the English language arts, there are a few studies which have attempted to determine pupil growth in writing ability. Because this study is concerned with the effect that frequency of writing and teacher evaluation have upon students' performance in written composition, particular attention has been directed toward literature related to these two problems.

Studies of Frequency of Writing

Experimental studies designed to ascertain whether students learn to write by writing have occurred more frequently at the college level. Lokke and Wykoff report an experiment in freshman composition at Purdue University. In two small classes students wrote from thirty-two to thirty-four themes during the semester, twice as many as were written by matching students in two control groups from seven instructors' classes. Experimental classes also devoted more class time to actual writing and discussion of their work. The researchers concluded that the groups which did twice as much writing had fewer failures and showed the most improvement. One interesting conclusion was that about 40 percent of the students reached their limit of achievement after writing twelve to fifteen themes.[1]

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[1] Ingrid M. Strom, "Summary of Investigations Relating to the English Language Arts in Secondary Education: 1960-1961, The English Journal, LI (February, 1962), 123.

In contrast to the findings of the Purdue study were those found in the study conducted by Dressel, Schmid, and Kincaid at Michigan State College. Their study, a comparison of those freshmen who did the most and those who did the least essay-type writing, used a questionnaire-type method to determine the amount of time spent in writing and included as criterion tests 300-word themes written at the beginning and at the end of the semester. The authors concluded that many college freshmen do little written composition except in the language communication courses and that mere frequency of writing is not enough to improve the quality of writing.[2]

Another more recent experiment at Purdue is reported by Maize. This study involved students in the lower fourth of the freshman class. With an average IQ of 99, these freshmen were reading, on the average, at the tenth-grade level. In the control group a grammar workbook-drill method was used, with weekly themes of about 250 words. Students wrote a total of fourteen themes a semester. In the experimental group, each student wrote a theme a day in a laboratory situation, totalling forty-two themes during the semester. No papers for this group were graded outside the class. Students divided into groups of five and read each other's work, with the teacher spending some time with each group. In addition, the teacher used the opaque projector and mimeographed the best papers. Students worked on one objective at a time, such as the topic sentence, organization, or conclusion. Maize reports that with the experimental group there was overwhelming evidence of superiority over the control group in the use of language.[1]

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[1] Virginia Lokke and George Wykoff, "Doubling Writing in Freshman Composition Experiment," School and Society, LXVIII (November, 1948), 437-439.

[2] Paul Dressel, John Schmid, Jr., and Gerald Kincaid, "The Effect of Writing Frequency upon Essay-Type Writing Proficiency at the College Level," Journal of Educational Research, XLVI (December, 1952), 285-293.

An emergency course organized at the University of Alberta to train teachers for Alberta schools enabled Buxton to study the effects of writing frequency and guided practice upon students' skill. Included in his three treatments were 257 freshmen. A control group followed the regular program, with normal assignments in writing. In the "writing" group students followed the same program of studies, with the addition of one essay of approximately 500 words each week. In the third group, the "writing and revision" group, students followed the same program as did the "writing" group, with the addition of intensive marking and grading and discussion of corrections and revisions. Although there were some significant differences when individual categories on criterion tests were considered, the statistical analysis indicated that the performance of the three groups did not differ significantly.[1]

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[1] Ray C. Maize, "Theme a Day," National Education Journal, XLII (September, 1953), 335-336.

More recently there have been a few studies concerned with the effect of additional theme writing on senior high school students. Hook, in his study of high schools from which superior students have come, found that these schools require considerable writing on the part of their students.[2]

Unless certain provisions are made, additional theme writing adds to the paper load, which the classroom teacher claims is already a serious problem. In recent years some school systems have initiated the lay reader plan, in which housewives or other persons in the community with degrees in English or professional training in written composition help with the correcting of students' papers. Notable among these programs is the contract correcting project involving the high schools in Newton and Concord and in the junior high schools of Quincy, Massachusetts, 1957-61. This project, which is described by Sauer, provided a two-weeks' workshop for readers. Sauer concludes that, after teachers and readers have cooperatively solved certain problems, the use of lay readers does provide teacher relief. In general, teachers, readers, and students expressed approval for the contract reader plan used in the schools of Newton, Concord, and Quincy.[1]

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[1] Earl William Buxton, "An Experiment to Test the Effects of Writing Frequency and Guided Practice Upon Students' Skill in Written Expression" (unpublished Doctoral dissertation, Stanford University, 1958).

[2] J. N. Hook, "Characteristics of Award-Winning High Schools," The English Journal, L (January, 1961), 9-15.

In a study of the effect of additional theme-writing, Peterson considered achievement of senior high school students in the areas of punctuation, paragraph identification, spelling, capitalization, and sentence structure and actual theme writing through the use of lay-theme readers. He found no significant differences between his control and his experimental groups. He recommended that a similar study be conducted over a longer period of time and that consideration be given not only to themes, but to all written work.[2]

Heys recounts an experiment conducted at Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School in which classes in grades nine through twelve were matched at each grade level. At each level one class wrote the equivalent of a theme a week, which was rigorously corrected, revised, and rewritten. The other class wrote a theme every third week but spent one class period each week doing free reading. Criterion tests were the STEP Writing Tests, with two test compositions read by experienced readers. Heys generalized that frequent writing practice probably yields greater dividends in grade twelve and with low groups rather than with the middle or high groups and that frequent writing practice with low groups probably results in greater improvement "within the area of content and organization than within the area of mechanics or of diction and rhetoric."[1] Teachers involved in the study concluded that this experiment does not substantiate the claim that frequent writing practice results in improved written expression. They also concluded that reading exerts a positive influence on writing ability and that this influence is a factor separate from the personality and enthusiasm of the teacher.[2]

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[1] Edwin H. Sauer, Contract Correcting: The Use of Lay Readers in the High School Composition Program, A Report to the Cooperative Research Program of the United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, and to the School and University Program for Research and Development (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Harvard University Press, March, 1962).

[2] E. Raymond Peterson, "Achievement Effect of Theme and Paragraph Writing in Senior High School Through Use of Lay-Readers" (unpublished Doctoral dissertation, University of Kansas, 1961).

Although certain studies, such as the one by Heys, are beginning to question the theory that frequent writing practice improves writing, this assertion still colors instructional procedures. French has noted that over the past ten years there has been a slight increase in writing practice. He found that students at the twelfth grade level receive more writing practice than students in lower grades, and college-preparatory or advanced students receive more practice in writing than do other students.[1]

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[1] Frank Heys, Jr., "The Theme-a-Week Assumption: A Report of an Experiment," The English Journal, LI (May, 1962), 320-322.

[2] Ibid.

Studies of Evaluation

A concomitant to writing practice is evaluation, which is interpreted in a variety of ways. To some teachers evaluation may signify indicating errors in mechanics, writing comments, and assigning a specific grade of A, B, C, D, or F. To other teachers evaluation may imply talking with the individual student as he notes his own progress on papers kept in file folders.

However evaluation is approached, there is always present the problem of whether the many hours spent in reading students' papers are producing desired results. Loban, Ryan, and Squire, in citing a study by Augustine Confrey, report, in particular, that "this study of compositions corrected by teachers of college freshmen showed that only twenty per cent of the comments helped the writers become more self-directive, and almost thirty-six per cent of the comments were worthless or positively false."[2]

A further problem in measurement of written composition is that of objectivity. To be valid, a test of student performance in written expression should require that the student express himself in writing. However, essay tests introduce such variables as rater subjectivity and interrelationships of the writer's experiences and attitudes toward composition topics. Attempts to control these variables have resulted primarily in research concerning the development and use of evaluation scales and the reliability of rating.

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[1] John J. French, "What English Teachers Think of Essay Testing," The English Journal, XLVI (April, 1957), 197.

[2] Walter Loban, Margaret Ryan, and James R. Squire, Teaching Language and Literature (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1961), p. 503.

One of the early attempts (1912) to devise a means for measuring the general merit of composition was the Hillegas Composition Scale,[1] which assigned values to various sample compositions. While this study did not attempt to define merit, the samples provided did furnish some guidance for teachers in measuring form and in determining general effectiveness on a comparative basis.

An experiment with the Hillegas Scale, which showed that the use of an objective measure such as this helped to unify grades given by various teachers to compositions, resulted in Ballou's Harvard-Newton Scales[2] in 1914. This instrument contained separate scales for measurement of four forms of discourse. Although each scale contained six compositions, Hinton reports there were insufficient samples of low quality.[1] A year later Thorndike developed the Extension of the Hillegas Scale[2] by adding several samples at different points at the middle part of the scale and inserting longer samples in place of the shorter. According to Hinton, this only posed another problem for the uninitiated scorer.[3]

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[1] Milo B. Hillegas, A Scale for the Measurement of Quality in English Composition by Young People (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1913).

[2] Frank W. Ballou, Scales for the Measurement of English Compositions (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, 1914).

Various other scales have been devised during the years intervening between the Hillegas Scale and present attempts at scales. Asbaugh feels that the Willing Scale, which was among the first to provide for the separation of the element of thought from the mechanics of capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and paragraphing, added much to composition measurement.[4] Hinton lists other scales,[5] such as the Van Wagenen and the Hosic Scales, which included as a part of measurement not only mechanics, but structure, style, and thought content.

In recent years the California Association of Teachers of English sponsored a study of writing ability of high school seniors in California.[1] Ten experienced readers at the University of California read and screened 561 essays. Eventually, high school teachers, college instructors, and college students cooperating in the study developed a six-point scale, based on the levels of competence demonstrated in these papers.

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[1] Eugene Mark Hinton, "An Analytical Study of the Qualities of Style and Rhetoric Found in English Compositions" (Ph. D. thesis, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1940), p. 3.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ernest J. Asbaugh, "The Measurement of Language: What Is Measured and Its Significance," Journal of Educational Research, IV (June, 1921), 33.

[5] Hinton, pp. 7-10.

The majority of the studies cited indicate that under certain conditions the use of composition scales tends to make more uniform the evaluation of written expression. Conditions specified include careful training of raters, sufficient samples of compositions, carefully devised comments and corrections, and pupil access to and familiarity with the scales.

Reader Reliability

Even with evaluation scales, complete with sample essays and correction guides, there remain at least two problems basic to measurement of student performance on an essay-type test. One is concerned with reliability of student performance and the other with reliability of readers.

Diederich suggests that essay test validity may be questioned if students are required to do writing which is unlike that normally done and if papers are marked chiefly for content. He further recommends that for a reliable estimate of a student's ability, there should be at least two sample compositions.[1]

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[1] California Association of Teachers of English, _A Scale for Evaluation of High School Student Essays_ (Champaign, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1960).

Certain authorities, such as Diederich,[2] have found that essays marked by as many as ten different teachers may be found to have grades ranging the full scale from A to F. Such disagreement among raters has resulted in various studies of reader reliability. Studies by Anderson and Traxler indicate that a single reader who is trained can read essay tests with high reliability, and several readers will, with training, assign to essay tests scores which do not vary greatly.[3] Diederich, French, and Carlton concluded in a study of ratings given freshman compositions that readers were not in agreement and that actually little is known about how to test by objective tests or by essay tests for such qualities as ideas, structures, style, and originality.[4]

Much discussion has centered around the essay part of the College Board Examination. As reported by Palmer, the General Composition Test was administered experimentally in 1951, 1952, and 1953.[5] During the next three years, the twohour test was administered as a regular examination. Palmer labeled the project a failure because of low reader reliability, unsatisfactory validity, and impracticality of grading. When he matched scores against students' high school course grades and teacher estimates of students' writing ability, he found the General Composition Test less reliable than the English Composition Test, which is largely objective, and the verbal section of the Scholastic Aptitude Test, which is wholly objective.

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[1] Paul B. Diederich, "Measurement of Skill in Writing," School Review, LIV (December, 1946), 584-592.

[2] Ibid., p. 584.

[3] Harold A. Anderson and Arthur E. Traxler, "Reliability of Reading an English Essay Test: A Second Study," School Review, XLVIII (September, 1940), 526.

[4] "Judges Disagree on Qualities That Characterize Good Writing," High Points, XLIV (February, 1962), 76.

[5] Orville Palmer, "Sense or Nonsense? The Objective Testing of English Composition," The English Journal, L (May, 1961), 318.

From the many studies of reliability of the reader and of pupil performance there has come at least one assumption worthy of note. As summarized by Anderson and Traxler, it may be assumed that, on the average, ". . . pupils do improve in their ability to use written English as they advance through secondary school."[1]

Summary

In reviewing the literature, the researcher has concentrated particularly on those studies related to writing frequency and evaluation. In the majority of studies cited, findings do not substantiate the assumption that frequent practice results in improvement. The review of the studies on evaluation raises the question of the worth of present evaluation procedures and emphasizes the long-discussed problem of variations in rating or grading practices. Certain benefits, such as a tendency toward more uniform grading practices, can be noted in the literature describing the development of various rating scales. Reports of research studies reveal many differences in findings and a need to explore more completely questions concerning the effects of writing practice and evaluation.

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[1] Anderson and Traxler, School Review, L, 526.

CHAPTER III

DESIGN AND PROCEDURES

Introduction

As previously stated, the purpose of this study has been to analyze the effects of frequency of writing and intensity of evaluation upon performance in written composition by high school students of varying abilities. Based on analyses of students' performance in written composition, the study was designed to test the following null hypotheses for significance at the .05 confidence levels:

1. No significant differences can be associated with intensity of teacher evaluation.
2. No significant differences can be associated with frequency of writing.
3. No significant differences can be associated with level of pupil ability.
4. There is no significant interaction between intensity of evaluation and frequency of writing.
5. There is no significant interaction between intensity of evaluation and ability level.
6. There is no significant interaction between frequency of writing and ability level.
7. There is no significant interaction among intensity of evaluation, frequency of writing, and ability level.
8. No significant differences can be associated with the teacher-school covariate.
9. No significant differences can be associated with sex differences.

In order that the hypotheses could be tested as stated, the study was designed to include eight classes at the same grade level in high school, with two teachers following four different approaches to intensity of teacher evaluation and frequency of writing. These approaches included the following:

1. In one group students wrote infrequently, with their compositions receiving moderate evaluation.
2. In a second group, students wrote frequently, with their compositions receiving moderate evaluation.
3. In a third group students wrote infrequently, but with compositions receiving intensive evaluation.
4. In a fourth group, students wrote frequently, with their compositions receiving intensive evaluation.

For the purpose of clarity, operational definitions are listed as follows:

1. Infrequent writing refers to the writing of 250-500 word themes at intervals of three to six weeks.
2. Frequent writing indicates the writing of one or two-paragraph themes at least once a week or the writing of one or two sentences as often as once a day.
3. Moderate evaluation is that kind of marking in which the teacher selects only an occasional paper to grade or corrects only those errors pertaining to skills which students are studying at a particular time.
4. Intensive evaluation involves the marking of every error and the writing of detailed comments on each composition. In this type of evaluation, students are expected to revise and rewrite.

In order to test specifically Hypotheses 3, 5, 6, and 7, it was necessary to classify students initially according to ability.

Design of the Study

A complex factorial design served as a model for this analysis of the effects of intensity of teacher evaluation and frequency of writing upon high school students' performance in written composition. A 2 x 2 x 3 design with two covariates was used, with the following main effects, interactions, and covariates:

1. Main effects

    Evaluation
    Writing (frequency)
    Levels of Ability

2. First order of interaction

    Evaluation x Writing
    Evaluation x Level of Ability
    Writing x Level of Ability

3. Second order of interaction

    Evaluation x Writing x Level of Ability

4. Covariates

    Teacher-school
    Sex

The design for the study is depicted in Table 1.

Description of Sample Population

This specific design made it necessary to locate two separate high schools in each of which a teacher was scheduled to teach four matched groups of students at the same grade level. Two comparable schools with the four groups of matched students were located in Pinellas County, Florida, where the study was conducted. Pinellas County is one of the five largest school systems in the State of Florida, which has sixty-seven school systems.

TABLE 1

EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN

		A_1	A_2	A_3
E_1	W_1			
	W_2			
E_2	W_1			
	W_2			

Code: A_1 - Ability low

A_2 - Ability medium

A_3 - Ability high

E_1 - Evaluation moderate

E_2 - Evaluation intense

W_1 - Writing infrequent

W_2 - Writing frequent

Arrangements were made before the start of the 1961-62 school year to conduct the year-long study in composition in comparable high schools in St. Petersburg, Florida, a city of approximately 193,000. Both schools, which include grades 10-12, have been constructed and occupied within the past seven years. Almost identical in design and structure, the schools are located on opposite sides of St. Petersburg. The schools draw their enrollments from families of predominantly middle income and have about the same percentage of the lower and upper economic groups. Family incomes are derived primarily from retirement sources and professional or service occupations.

Under the administration of the Pinellas County Board of Public Instruction, the schools in this study are typical of high schools in this county system of 100 schools. Consultant and supervisory services are available to these and to other secondary schools on an equal basis. Library facilities and instructional resources are excellent in both schools. Equipped with dictionaries and with bulletin boards for displaying materials, classrooms used by students participating in the study are very much alike.

The two women teachers selected for participation in the study have had similar preparation. Both hold graduate teaching certificates from the State of Florida (Rank II). While one of the teachers had had more teaching experience, it was felt that comparable attitudes, health, personality, age, and general effectiveness of the two made them especially suitable for the conducting of these two parallel studies.

Four tenth-grade classes at School A and four tenth-grade classes at School B were selected for participation in the study. School A had an enrollment of approximately 1650 students and School B an enrollment of approximately 1500 students during the school year 1961-62. The two schools, along with the majority of secondary schools in Pinellas County, group their students homegeneously on the basis of ability, achievement, and teacher recommendation. The following test scores, which are available in Pinellas County, are used as bases for grouping in both schools: Pintner General Ability Test, Metropolitan Achievement Battery, School and College Ability Test, and Differential Aptitude Tests.

For practical purposes it was decided to conduct the study in classes designated as average. However, on the basis of verbal reasoning scores on the Differential Aptitude Tests, which were administered in September, 1961, it was initially possible to classify these students within these average groups as low, middle, or high.

Two factors contributed to the decision to use the DAT scores: (1) the completeness of the data; (2) support found in such reviews of the DAT Tests as that by John B. Carroll, Professor of Education, Harvard University. According to Carroll, the Verbal Reasoning section of DAT is "a good measure of the student's ability to handle complex logical relationships which can be stated in verbal terms, and, in this sense, it is largely a measure of 'intelligence' as this is ordinarily conceived."[1]

Selection of Measuring Instruments

Criterion tests selected as measuring instruments were the STEP Essay Tests[2] and the STEP Writing Tests,[3] Forms 2A and 2B. The researcher selected these tests after a thorough study of available composition tests and of reviews by various authorities in the fields of written expression and of testing.

Reviews of STEP Essay Tests include that by John S. Diekhoff, who notes that test formulators approached these tests on the assumption that "writing is the test of writing."[4] Pointing out that the instructions are carefully stated, that sample essays are available for comparison, and that essay topics are appropriate to grade levels, he qualifies his approval of the tests by emphasizing that these are nevertheless essay tests, with the attendant problem of the subjectivity and unreliability of raters.[5] Another favorable review is that by Louis C. Zahner, who feels that the only satisfactory way to test written expression is by means of the essay test. He proceeds, however, to point out the difficulty of securing reader reliability and notes the absence of sufficient samples with comments on desirable qualities in a composition. Even with these shortcomings, Zahner feels the STEP Essay Test is still a useful test.[1]

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[1] Oscar Krisen Buros (ed.), The Fifth Mental Measurements Yearbook (Highland Park, New Jersey: The Gryphon Press, 1959), p. 671.

[2] Cooperative Sequential Tests of Educational Progress - Essay Tests (Princeton, New Jersey: Educational Testing Service, 1957).

[3] Cooperative Sequential Tests of Educational Progress - Writing (Princeton, New Jersey: Educational Testing Service, 1957).

[4] Buros, p. 357.

[5] Ibid., p. 358.

Each form of the Essay Test requires thirty-five minutes of writing time on the part of the pupil. In the test booklet, which contains eight pages, there are general directions applicable to all levels and specific directions for writing the essay for each form. The student is directed to spend five minutes planning on the topic specified, with thirty minutes given to writing. Although there are five ruled pages for the actual writing, no specific length is suggested.

The STEP Handbook for Essay Tests[2] contains background information concerning the development of the tests, directions for administering the test and for scoring, comparison essays, and directions for interpreting scores. There are four comparison essays for each of the forms, with instructions for matching the essay being graded against the most comparable in the handbook. The rater is instructed to use a seven-point scale, with samples given only for Rating 6

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 358.

[2] Cooperative Sequential Tests of Educational Progress - Handbook for Essay Tests, Level 2 (Princeton, New Jersey: Educational Testing Service, 1957), p. 5.

(high), Rating 4 (middle), and Rating 2 (low).

In his review of the STEP Writing Test, Zahner indicates that the STEP Essay and the STEP Writing Tests may well complement each other. He questions the validity of the STEP Writing Test, claiming that it falls not in the area of writing, but somewhere "between a test of proofreading and one of editing."[1] Although noting specific weaknesses of the test, Zahner credits this test with indicating how much the student knows about the skills of written composition.

In her review of the Writing Tests, Charlotte Croon Davis notes that these tests are a definite measure of reading ability. Although stressing the need for certain improvements, she commends the authors for the progress they have made in the testing of certain of the skills basic to good writing but difficult to measure.[2]

In actuality, the STEP Writing Test is a seventy-minute objective test, with two forms at each of the grade levels (grades 4-6, 7-9, 10-12, and 13-14). Complete directions for administering and scoring the tests, a manual for interpreting scores, and a full technical report are all available. Each of the Writing Tests consists of sixty questions, for which students are directed to select the best answer from among four possible choices. Authors of the tests have, according to the manual, included items from the following categories:

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[1] Buros, p. 363.

[2] *Ibid*., pp. 360-361.

1. Organization. Reasonable ordering of ideas, events, facts, etc.
2. Conventions. Attention to syntax or sentence structure, diction in the sense of gross errors of word choice, punctuation, and spelling.
3. Critical thinking. Detection of unstated assumptions, perception of cause-and-effect relationships, and anticipation of the needs of the reader.
4. Effectiveness. Adequacy of emphasis, adequacy of development, exactness of expression, economy, simplicity, and variety.
5. Appropriateness. Choice of a level of usage suitable to purpose and reader; i.e., using the right "tone" and appropriate diction and employing tact where desirable.[1]

In this STEP Writing Test, most of the items are revision items, which require the student to identify an error or weakness and select the most satisfactory revision. Items are based largely on student writing, which includes "essays, minutes of meetings, reports, formal and informal letters, replies to questionnaires, stories, announcements, editorials, directions, etc."[2]

While the criterion tests possess certain shortcomings characteristic of tests designed to measure written expression, they were selected by the researcher as the most satisfactory tests available for this particular study. The careful preparations which preceded the actual construction of the tests, the expertness with which the statistical framework was constructed, and the complementary feature of the two tests which attempt to measure both the student's actual writing and his knowledge of writing skills were the main factors influencing this particular choice of tests.

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[1] Cooperative Sequential Tests of Educational Progress - Manual for Interpreting Scores - Writing (Princeton, New Jersey: Educational Testing Service, 1957), p. 9.

[2] Ibid.

Preliminary Procedures

Early in October, 1961, before teachers began differentiating their approaches to evaluation and writing frequency, STEP Essay and STEP Writing Tests, Form 2B, were administered at both schools to a total of 193 students. In each school the researcher, with the assistance of guidance personnel, administered at one time the Essay Test to the students involved in the study. Because of scheduling problems, however, it was necessary for the two teachers involved in the study to administer the STEP Writing Test to individual classes. These teachers received careful instructions in administering the tests.

Following the testing, conferences were held with each of the teachers in order to set up controls for the four approaches to the teaching of composition. The Pinellas County curriculum guide in language arts[1] served as the basis for preplanning. Each teacher was provided with a packet of materials, which included various rating scales, suggestions for composition topics, ideas for handling the paper load, and various other materials related to the teaching of writing. Individual folders were provided so that papers for each student could be filed for ready reference. The textbook used in both of the schools is Warriner's Grammar and Composition - Grade 10.[1] Both teachers used composition guides and topics included in this text, along with suggestions and material provided in the teacher's manual.[2]

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[1] Resource Guidebook for the Language Arts Program of Pinellas County (Clearwater, Florida: Pinellas County Board of Public Instruction, 1958).

One of the major agreements reached by personnel involved was that concerning criteria for effective writing. Although other evaluation scales include more detailed suggestions for marking and commenting on papers, the criteria for written composition listed in the California Scale for Evaluation of High School Student Essays[3] were selected as basic. While the complete criteria are listed in Appendix B, it should be noted that attention is directed to the content, organization, and style and mechanics of students' composition. Copies of the California scale were made available to students, who were kept aware of these particular objectives.

Other areas requiring teacher preparation included planning for composition types and topics and deciding on methods of evaluation. The county curriculum guide furnished direction in the selection of writing sequence. Emphasis was first directed to the writing of effective sentences, followed by the development of the paragraph. Various types of writing included description, exposition, and narration. Evaluation scales which proved most helpful to teachers in reaching decisions on marking and correcting were the previously mentioned California Scale and Suggestions for Evaluating Junior High School Writing.[1]

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[1] John E. Warriner, English Grammar and Composition: Grade 10 (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1958).

[2] John E. Warriner and Francis Griffith, Teacher's Manual, English Grammar and Composition - 10 (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1961), pp. 66-77.

[3] California Association of Teachers of English, A Scale for Evaluation of High School Student Essays (Champaign, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1960), p. 13.

Teachers were instructed to conduct the English program except for written composition, in the usual manner with all four of their classes. They were cautioned to avoid additional teaching of writing in any of the classes, such as might occur with the writing of sentences for practice drills. There was, of course, some readjustment necessary so far as curricular content was concerned in order that frequent writing might be done. In most cases, it was possible to make this adjustment in the area of literature. Because of this careful preparation of these specific adjustments, there was no resentment evident on the part of students as to the differences in frequency and evaluation of writing.

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[1] Association of English Teachers of Western Pennsylvania, Suggestions for Evaluating Junior High School Writing (Champaign, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, n.d.).

Description of Treatments

As soon as the criterion tests had been administered and preliminary planning completed, teachers proceeded to use for each one of four classes a different combination of frequency of writing and intensity of teacher evaluation. All groups wrote their compositions in class, but some of the correcting and revising was done outside the classroom. Students had equal opportunities to confer with teachers concerning composition problems or progress. With the order of sequence determined from a table of random numbers,[1] treatments were scheduled in the same order at each school.

Infrequent Writing, with Moderate Evaluation

Writing a theme of approximately 250 words every grading period (three times a semester), students in this group wrote descriptive and personal essays and literary criticisms. Essay topics included such subjects as descriptions of teenagers' rooms, character sketches of older brothers, or appraisals of books and literary selections read during the year. Evaluation concentrated one time on sentence structure, another on logic and organization.

Frequent Writing, with Moderate Evaluation

At least four days each week this group wrote some form of composition. Compositions varied in length from one or two sentences to two pages or more. Topics for short compositions ranged from "I have a favorite day dream" to "If I were principal of this school." The longer themes included descriptive, personal, and critical essays, with evaluation following the same pattern as described in the preceding approach.

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[1] E. F. Lindquist, Statistical Analysis in Educational Research (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1940), pp. 262-264.

Infrequent Writing, with Intensive Evaluation

Writing three themes each semester, students in this group also wrote descriptive essays, personal essays, and literary criticisms. Approximately 250 words in length, these themes received intensive evaluation. Teachers were careful to mark every error in mechanics, sentence structure, and usage and to write detailed comments on general effectiveness. Students were required to correct errors, revise, and rewrite these themes until judged satisfactory by the teacher.

Frequent Writing, with Intensive Evaluation

Writing on topics similar to those assigned to students in the other groups, students in this group wrote compositions of approximately 250 words at least once a week. Again teachers carefully marked every error and wrote comments with students required to correct, revise, and rewrite as in the preceding treatment. Because of the time required in evaluating these longer compositions, it was not possible to allow for more frequent writing practice in this approach.

During the course of the year's study, there were frequent observations by the researcher and by other supervisory personnel. Occasional conferences were held with the two teachers in an effort to maintain the controls as originally specified. The work of each student was kept in a file folder so that the student and the teacher could note progress or so that the researcher could study topics or evaluative procedures.

Administration of Final Testing

During the second and third weeks of May, 1962, STEP Essay and STEP Writing Tests, Form 2A, were administered to students involved in the study. Just as with preliminary testing, the researcher administered the Essay Test to the total group in each school and teachers administered the STEP Writing Test to individual classes. Because of transfers, withdrawals, and absences, complete data were available for only 137 students.

Both forms of the Essay Tests were rated by three experienced raters. Answer sheets for the Writing Tests were machine scored. Essay tests were given code numbers and shuffled before being submitted to the raters. Raw scores for both Essay and Writing tests were recorded on data sheets and differences computed before information was recorded on IBM cards.

Function of Raters

Raters selected to rate the Essay Tests were all certified teachers of English with teaching experience in secondary school English. Each one of the three raters has had special training or experience in the teaching of composition. Because of home responsibilities, none of these raters was teaching regularly in a public school classroom during the 1961-62 school year. A research grant from the United States Office of Education permitted payment of a standard fee to the essay test evaluators.

The researcher gave each rater individual instruction in the rating of the Essay Tests. Careful attention was given to the directions in the STEP Handbook for Essay Tests.[1] In addition to becoming thoroughly familiar with the instructions, each rater found it essential to make a careful study of the sample essays included in the handbook and to note their positions on the seven-point scale. Following suggestions in the handbook directions, raters thus read the coded essays carefully, placing them in piles representative of the separate points on the rating scale. The points on the rating scale are listed as follows:

7 -------------------- (No sample given)
6 -- High --------- (Sample included)
5 -------------------- (No sample given)
4 -- Middle ------- (Samples included)
3 -------------------- (No sample given)
2 -- Low ---------- (Sample included)
1 -------------------- (No sample given)

Thus, if the rater felt that an essay was superior to the essay sample for Rating 6, she would accord to the superior essay the rating of 7. On the other hand, if an essay seemed to fall at an intermediate point, the rater would use the rating of 5 or 3. Of course, if an essay seemed to be even poorer than that accorded the rating of 2, she would use the rating at the bottom of the scale.

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[1] Cooperative Sequential Tests of Educational Progress - Handbook for Essay Tests, Level 2 (Princeton, New Jersey: Educational Testing Service, 1957).

Raters were cautioned to examine their personal biases concerning composition, such as handwriting, spelling, or colloquialisms. Of particular value in deciding which factors should receive emphasis was the information concerning the broad criteria set up by the planning committee for the Essay tests. Raters who originally assisted in the preparation of the Essay tests had been instructed to score papers on the basis of three factors weighted as follows:

Quality of thought	50%
Style	30%
Conventions	20%

Included as background information in the section, "Scoring the Papers," in the handbook for the Essay tests, the following explanations served as guides to the raters participating in the study described in this paper:

> 'Quality of thought' was defined as 'the selection and the adequacy of ideas and supplementary details, and the manner of their organization (i.e., the way in which their connections are derived from the arrangement of parts).'
>
> 'Style' was defined as 'clearness, effectiveness, and appropriateness, including matters of structure and diction, emphasis, the means of transition between ideas, and the finer points of simplicity, economy, variety, and exactness of expression.'
>
> 'Conventions' was defined as 'the proprieties of mechanical form, including grammar and usage, capitalization, punctuation, and the mechanical aspects of the structure of sentences.'[1]

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[1] Ibid., p. 5.

With such preliminary training, it was felt that every feasible preparation had been made in an effort to secure the most reliable rating of the Essay tests. Raters received the first set of essays during December, 1961, and January, 1962, and the second set during May and June, 1962. It was of course necessary to review instructions with raters before the rating of the STEP tests administered in May.

It should be noted that raters rated the papers independently, with no knowledge of the ratings being given by the other raters. This independent rating was accomplished by means of separate cover sheets, which were attached to each essay for each evaluator. As each rater concluded the rating, her evaluation sheet was removed before the next rater received the essays. Both cover sheets and essays were marked with identifying code numbers for students. At no time during the evaluation of Essay tests were there conferences between the raters. It was the intent of the researcher to maintain throughout both readings the anonymity of the student writer and, by spacing the two readings some two months apart, to avoid immediate comparisons between the pre- and post-tests.

Administration of Questionnaires

Following the administration of the final criterion tests, questionnaires concerning the study were submitted to all students involved in the year-long study. Questionnaires were designed to secure student reactions to differences in approaches to the teaching of written composition during the school year 1961-62 as compared with the teaching they could remember from previous years. (See Appendix E.) While the questionnaires reveal only subjective judgments, certain interesting observations will be discussed briefly in Chapter IV.

Summary

In this study of the effects of frequency of writing and intensity of evaluation upon performance in written composition by high school students of varying abilities, a 2 x 2 x 3 design with two covariates was used. Main effects to be analyzed included evaluation (moderate and intensive), writing frequency (infrequent and frequent), and levels of ability (high, middle, and low). Also to be included in the final analysis were first and second orders of interaction and the two covariates, teacher-school and sex.

In order to test the null hypotheses as stated, arrangements were made to conduct the study in two comparable high schools in Pinellas County, Florida. In each school four different combinations of intensity of evaluation and writing frequency were used as treatments. Students selected for the study, while designated as "average," were initially classified as high, middle, or low.

The two teachers and the three essay-test evaluators individually received careful instructions and guidance during the time the study was in process.

Measuring instruments selected included the STEP

Essay Tests and the STEP Writing Tests, Forms 2A and 2B. Preliminary testing was done early in October, 1961, and the final testing in May, 1962. Questionnaires were administered to students. Objective data were carefully recorded and differences computed before recording on IBM cards for the final analysis.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Review of Hypotheses and Design

As stated in Chapter III, analysis of the effects of frequency of writing and intensity of evaluation upon performance in written composition by high school students of varying abilities involved testing the following null hypotheses at the .05 confidence levels:

1. No significant differences can be associated with intensity of teacher evaluation.
2. No significant differences can be associated with frequency of writing.
3. No significant differences can be associated with level of pupil ability.
4. There is no significant interaction between intensity of evaluation and frequency of writing.
5. There is no significant interaction between intensity of evaluation and ability level.
6. There is no significant interaction between frequency of writing and ability level.
7. There is no significant interaction among intensity of evaluation, frequency of writing, and ability level.
8. No significant differences can be associated with the teacher-school covariate.
9. No significant differences can be associated with the sex covariate.

A complex factorial design served as a model for this analysis. The 2 x 2 x 3 design with two covariates which was used for this study is presented in detail in Chapter III, with the design depicted in Table 1.

As will be noted in Table 1, the experiment was so designed that in each school one teacher used a different combination of frequency of writing and intensity of evaluation in teaching written composition to each one of four different tenth grade classes. The four approaches, which are described in full in Chapter III, are identified as follows:

1. E_1W_1 - moderate evaluation with infrequent writing
2. E_1W_2 - moderate evaluation with frequent writing
3. E_2W_1 - intensive evaluation with infrequent writing
4. E_2W_2 - intensive evaluation with frequent writing.

Students in each of the above groups were initially classified according to verbal aptitude scores on the Differential Aptitude Test[1] administered in September, 1961. On the basis of these DAT test scores, students were classified according to the following categories (see Chapter III, p. 30): ability low (L_1), ability medium (L_2), and ability high (L_3). Raw score ranges for each ability level in each group are listed in Appendix C.

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[1] George K. Bennett, Harold G. Seashore, and Alexander Wesman, Differential Aptitude Tests--Verbal Reasoning, Form A (New York: The Psychological Corporation, 1947).

Recording of Data

Raters' scores for the STEP Essay Tests, for both Forms 2B and 2A, were converted to standard scores. The converted rater scores were then used to determine the subject's mean standard score for each of the two forms of the Essay Test. Differences were computed between these mean scores and recorded on the subject's IBM cards.

Also recorded on IBM cards were raw scores given by the three raters for both forms of the STEP Essay Tests. The IBM Computer at The Florida State University Computing Center was utilized to run correlations for the purpose of determining rater reliability.[1]

Subject scores for the STEP Writing Tests, Forms 2B and 2A, were converted to standard scores and differences computed. These differences, along with those for the Essay Tests, were recorded on the IBM cards. The 709 Computer was also utilized to compute means and standard deviations of differences for both forms of both tests.

Information recorded on the subject cards is indicated in the format illustrated in Appendix D.[2]

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[1] All analysis was on IBM facilities of the Computing Center at The Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida. Partial support of the Computing Center was given by the National Science Foundation under Grant 17467.

[2] Supplementary raw data have been deposited as Document number 7480 with the ADI Auxiliary Publications Project, Photoduplication Service, Library of Congress, Washington 25, D.C. A copy may be secured by citing the Document number and by remitting $1.25 for photoprints, or $1.25 for 35 mm. microfilm. Advance payment is required. Make checks or money orders payable to: Chief, Photoduplication Service, Library of Congress.

Analysis of Data

STEP Essay Tests

The means and standard deviations of the differences for the STEP Essay Tests are shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2

MEAN DIFFERENCES AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS FOR ESSAY TESTS

		Differences			Standard Deviations		
		L_1	L_2	L_3	L_1	L_2	L_3
E_1	W_1	8.23	9.09	9.88	14.53	13.45	9.67
	W_2	9.13	-.78	10.67	10.38	13.22	13.31
E_2	W_1	11.00	8.00	10.25	10.95	9.26	11.88
	W_2	7.17	11.40	7.08	8.78	15.50	16.44

N = 137

STEP Writing Tests

The means and standard deviations of the differences for the STEP Writing Tests are shown in Table 3.

TABLE 3

MEAN DIFFERENCES AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS FOR WRITING TESTS

		Differences			Standard Deviations		
		L_1	L_2	L_3	L_1	L_2	L_3
E_1	W_1	4.69	6.55	7.38	11.69	12.64	6.80
	W_2	8.25	3.33	1.10	5.42	12.20	15.76
E_2	W_1	2.68	10.67	13.25	13.34	11.32	4.50
	W_2	2.08	.50	5.42	13.74	9.64	13.52

N = 137

Reliability of Raters

Because the same group of raters read all essays on each topic, it was possible to obtain a measure of the agreement among raters' scores. It will be recalled that a seven-point scale was used by each of the raters, with comparison essays furnished for Ratings 2, 4, and 6. A score of 6 was considered high, a score of 4 was considered middle, and a score of 2 was considered low.

Table 4 lists the mean scores and standard deviations for each rater over all students on each topic.

TABLE 4

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF RATINGS GIVEN ESSAY TESTS

	Pretest		Posttest	
Rater	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	3.60	1.11	4.16	1.19
2	2.70	1.14	2.83	0.94
3	2.61	0.95	4.07	1.2-

N = 137

A correlation of the raters' scores, which is an estimate of the consistency with which they ranked the students' papers, was computed for each form of the Essay Test. The results are recorded in Table 5.

TABLE 5

CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS FOR RATERS

	Pretest		Posttest	
Rater	1	2	1	2
2	.62		.50	
3	.55	.57	.76	.56

N = 137

The correlation coefficients listed in the preceding table are consistent with findings reported in Chapter II. Low reader reliability on essay tests is generally reported in studies such as those by Diederich, French, and Carlton[1] and by Palmer.[2]

Results of Analysis of Covariance

Results of the Essay Tests and of the Writing Tests were subjected to an analysis of covariance. F tests were computed on the following main effects, interactions, and covariates for both tests:

Main effects

Evaluation (E)
Writing frequency (W)
Levels of ability (L)

Interactions

E x W
E x L
W x L
E x W x L

Covariates

Sex
Teacher-school

No main effects or interactions are significant for the Essay Tests at the .05 level. Neither covariate is significant at the .05 level for the STEP Essay Tests.

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[1] "Judges Disagree on Qualities That Characterize Good Writing," High Points, XLIV (February, 1962), 76.

[2] Palmer, The English Journal, L (May, 1961), 318.

When the STEP Writing Test data are analyzed, the teacher-school covariate is significant at the .05 level. No other significant main effects or interactions appear.

The researcher believes that, because of the conditions under which the study was done, the importance of the teacher-school covariate, which is significant, cannot be judged. The two teachers who were involved in the study taught at different schools. Consequently there is a confounding of the effect attributable to the teacher with the effect attributable to the school. Thus, no interpretation of the significant F ratio can be made except to remark that in some unexplained way the teacher-school complex was different in each school. Had the compounding not been inherent in the design of the study and had the study been more elaborate, then each would have been regarded as main effects and tested as such.

Results of this analysis appear in Table 6.

Questionnaires

Results of the questionnaires completed by students appear in Appendix E. No attempt was made to analyze these results statistically, but certain observations about them are relevant.

(1) At School A, 93% of the students completing the questionnaire gave affirmative answers to the question concerning whether they had noted differences in the way composition had been taught during 1962-63 as compared with preceding years. At School B, 47% answered this question affirmatively.

TABLE 6

F TESTS FOR HYPOTHESES

Source of Variation	STEP Essay Test			STEP Writing Test		
	d.f. d.f.	Sum of Squares Sum of Squares	F Ratios F Ratios	d.f. d.f.	Sum of Squares Sum of Squares	F Ratios F Ratios
Frequency (W)	1	46.21	.28	1	300.41	2.04
Evaluation (E)	1	48.75	.30	1	1.08	.01
Ability (L)	2	139.12	.43	2	36.45	.12
Interactions						
E x W	1	8.58	.05	1	195.39	1.33
E x L	2	294.77	.91	2	577.99	1.96
W x L	2	34.60	.11	2	509.66	1.73
E x W x L	2	394.60	1.21	2	129.54	.44
Covariates						
Sex	1	125.46	.77	1	80.43	.55
Teacher-School	1	3.87	.02	1	464.08	3.15*
Error	123	20020.05		123	18136.84	
Total	136	21297.13		136	20403.57	

* $p < .05$

(2) The majority of students in all groups at both schools checked scale point 3, "just right," to indicate their opinions of the amount of writing done during the school year.

(3) Students at School A seemed to differ from students at School B when they compared the amount of writing practice during the school year 1961-62 with that of the preceding year. At School A, a majority of students in the moderate evaluation-frequent writing and in the intensive evaluation-frequent writing groups checked scale point 5, "much more," to indicate they had had more writing practice during 1961-62. In School B, the majority of students in both of the frequent writing groups checked scale points 3, "about the same," and 4. It is interesting to note the similarities in distribution of responses among all the groups in School B.

(4) The majority of students in all the groups in both schools responded to the question concerning the value of evaluation by the teacher by checking scale point 3, "some value," 4, and 5, "great value."

(5) The majority of students in both schools indicated that they felt they had improved in their writing during the year. Only one student checked the scale point designating no improvement at all.

Summary of Findings

On the basis of these findings, all of the research hypotheses are rejected. With the exception of that pertaining to the teacher-school covariate, all of the null hypotheses are sustained.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

As has been pointed out in the preliminary chapters, there is today a growing awareness on the part of many, whether they be teachers, employers, or editors, of the need for certain improvements in the teaching of written expression. This concern for improving writing instruction has resulted in many professional articles which contain such suggestions as lightening the load of the English teacher or increasing students' reading. However, there is relatively little actual research reported concerning those factors assumed to be essential in composition instruction.

Generally considered as requisites to effective teaching of writing are frequent practice and meticulous marking. It has thus been the purpose of this study to examine the effects of frequency of writing and intensity of evaluation upon high school students' performance in written composition. The study also examined the effects of frequency and evaluation in light of pupil ability. The main hypotheses advanced and tested were that there are no significant differences resulting from writing practice or from variations in evaluation.

The design of the study necessitated the researcher's arranging in two separate high schools for a teacher to use different combinations of evaluation and writing frequency for each of four classes. These four treatments included: moderate evaluation-infrequent writing (E_1W_1); moderate evaluation-frequent writing (E_1W_2); intensive evaluation-infrequent writing (E_2W_1); and intensive evaluation-frequent writing (E_2W_2). On the basis of comparable criteria, which included scores from ability and achievement tests and teacher recommendations, students involved in this study were scheduled in classes designated as average. However, within each of these classes, students were at the beginning further classified as "high," "middle," or "low," on the basis of DAT verbal scores.

Criterion tests included the STEP Essay and the STEP Writing Tests, with Form 2B administered in October, 1961, and Form 2A administered in May, 1962. Teachers were carefully instructed as to the controls to be maintained during the months intervening between the pre- and post-testing. Essay tests were rated by qualified raters who also received special training. Computer facilities at Florida State University were utilized for recording data on IBM cards and for analyzing these data by means of analysis of covariance techniques.

As with any of the behavioral studies, certain limitations restricted the study. The problem of matching teachers and students at a given grade level limited the sample size. In this particular study, complete data were obtained for 137 students. Grouping procedures at both schools limited consideration of ranges in ability level to average classes only.

As has been mentioned in the preceding chapter, no attempt was made to analyze the teacher-school differences. Such an analysis would take into consideration such differences as instruction in feeder junior high schools, teacher competency, and general atmosphere of each school.

Teachers in the study found the necessity for carrying regular teaching loads during 1961-62 was a slight handicap. Both teachers were most cooperative and enthusiastic, but the planning and evaluating necessary for the study did add to their schedules. Unfortunately, neither local school resources nor the grant from the United States Office of Education provided funds for relieving these teachers of any of their regular responsibilities.

Finally, certain limitations may be found in the period of time set up for the study. However, it is assumed that a school year represents a significant unit in the life of a high school student, and a study designed to last seven or eight months might indicate a difference. A study lasting over a period of two or more years is of course desirable but poses problems with respect to maintaining controls and scheduling students in the same groups.

Conclusions

Because the analysis of the data reveals no differences in group performance resulting from writing practice or intensity of evaluation, the following conclusions, relevant to this particular study, have been reached:

1. There is no assurance that intensive evaluation is any more effective than moderate evaluation in improving the quality of written composition.
2. It must not be assumed that frequent practice is in itself a means of improving writing.
3. There is no evidence that any one combination of frequency of writing and intensity of evaluation is more effective than another.
4. There is no indication that frequent writing and intensive evaluation are any more effective for one ability level than are infrequent writing and moderate evaluation.

Implications of the Study

Since the conclusions stated are somewhat contrary to assumptions long considered basic to composition instruction, it is important to note the following implications, which will be discussed in relation to the hypotheses:

Intensity of Evaluation (Hypothesis 1)

Inasmuch as no significant differences are associated with differences in intensity of teacher evaluation, there should be careful study of the kinds of evaluation actually helpful to students. If the careful marking of every error, the writing of detailed comments, and the requiring of revisions and corrections seem to be no more effective than marking only for errors in areas being emphasized, time spent in grading papers may be misspent effort.

This research did not investigate the effectiveness of such recommended grading techniques as use of the lay reader, conferences with individual students, tape-recorded evaluations by the teacher, or group discussions and evaluations. Such evaluation procedures should be studied to determine whether they would singly or in combination markedly increase the effectiveness of writing.

Writing Practice (Hypothesis 2)

The fact that no significant differences can be associated with practice emphasizes the need for additional research to determine the relationships between writing practice and other factors. Although motivational techniques were not included in the design of this study, the findings indicate a need for a better understanding of what motivates students to write. Then, too, in light of these findings and those of the Heys study,[1] more attention should be given to the relationship of reading and effectiveness in writing. There is also insufficient evidence as to the relationship which exists between thinking and writing. Teachers and students alike need a better understanding of the place of logic and thought in the writing process.

Level of Pupil Ability (Hypothesis 3)

While there are in this study no significant differences associated with levels of ability, research should be designed to investigate the effects of teacher evaluation and writing frequency upon wider ranges of ability. More intensive study needs to be directed toward finding the relative benefits of frequent practice or careful evaluation for the slow, the average, or the superior student.

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[1] Heys, The English Journal, LI (May, 1962), 320-322.

Practice, Evaluation, and Ability Level (Hypotheses 4, 5, 6, 7)

The fact that no significant differences can be associated with intensity of teacher evaluation, frequency of writing, or level of pupil ability, either as main effects or as interactions, emphasizes the need for careful study of the total program of composition instruction. In addition to studies needed to determine effective motivation and procedures, some study should concentrate on the training given teachers who are to teach writing. Not only teacher-training institutions but also inservice programs should be studied in light of the help given teachers in understanding the writing process and the factors contributing to its effectiveness.

Any concern for the total program of instruction in composition would also direct investigation to the effects of additional time for planning for instruction, for conferring with students, and for evaluating progress. More research is needed to determine the results of reducing the English teacher's load, of providing relief from clerical duties by means of teachers' aides, of using lay readers to give grading assistance, and of introducing programed materials for teaching basic skills.

Teacher-School Variable (Hypothesis 8)

Analysis of the covariates indicates a difference between the two schools. This difference may be due to such factors as general school environment, the extent of school-wide writing instruction, the kinds of writing experiences in all classes, or teacher competency. Continued study should be given these factors to determine the effect each one has on total improvement in writing.

Sex (Hypothesis 9)

Although this study reveals no differences in writing improvement between boys and girls, it is felt that further study should be directed to sex differences in written composition, with consideration given to appropriateness of topics assigned and teacher evaluations made.

Recommendations for Further Research

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made for further research:

(1) Similar studies concerning the effects of evaluation and writing practice upon students' performance in written expression should be conducted for longer periods of time at both the junior and the senior high school levels.

(2) There should be more intensive investigation concerning the effects these factors or their combinations have upon students with wide differences in ability.

(3) In addition to studies of differences in performance at various ability levels, there should be further

studies of individual differences which affect performance in writing. Research might well seek out those approaches most effective not only for the academically talented and for the slow learner, but also for the creative and the less creative.

(4) Further studies should be made of the relationships between writing and reading and between writing and thinking.

(5) There should be studies made of those teacher traits, abilities, and methods most desirable for the teacher of composition.

(6) Research should be conducted concerning the effects of including more comprehensive teaching of composition and language at teacher-training institutions.

(7) Study should be directed to determining the results of providing inservice programs such as workshops, institutes, or group study. Some methods should be devised for determining whether students improve in writing when teachers are given needed insights into the writing process, understandings of criteria for judging effective writing, and techniques for motivating good writing.

(8) Long-range or follow-up studies should be designed to determine the effectiveness of sequential planning of composition programs in school systems.

(9) Further study should be directed to evaluation techniques, especially the teacher-student conference.

(10) More attention should be given to research concerning the writing students do in addition to theme-writing. This would include written expression done in addition to that in English classes.

The results of this study emphasize the need for more actual research in the area of written composition. Teachers and administrators have long assumed that if a student were to practice writing and have his paper carefully corrected, he would improve in written expression. With this study and others placing the security of such an assumption in question, the entire field of writing invites further exploration. Not until more is actually known concerning the total writing process will there be real progress toward effectiveness in written composition.

APPENDIX A

ANALYSIS OF ITEM CATEGORIES OF STEP WRITING TESTS

TABLE 7

STEP WRITING TESTS

Categories According to Which Items Were Classified[1]

Total Number of Items in Category:	SKILL					TYPE OF MATERIAL									
	Organization	Conventions	Critical Thinking	Effectiveness	Appropriateness	Minutes	Directions	News Story	Report	Essay, Speech	Personal Narrative	Story	Announcement, Advertisement	Editorial	Character Study
2A	24	35	13	32	8	7	7	8	8	15	22				
2B	16	28	26	21	18				7	15	7	7	8	8	8

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[1] Cooperative Sequential Tests of Educational Progress - Teachers Guide (Princeton, New Jersey: Educational Testing Service, 1959), pp. 46, 29-50.

APPENDIX B

MATERIALS CONTAINING SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHERS PARTICIPATING IN STUDY

A GUIDE TO THE TEACHING OF WRITTEN COMPOSITION

(Prepared for Teachers Participating in
Special Research Study in Written Composition)

Lois V. Arnold, Coordinator of English
Pinellas County Public Schools
1961

FOREWORD

These materials have been prepared especially for those teachers participating in the research project, "The Study of the Effects of Frequency of Writing and Intensity of Teacher Evaluation upon Students' Performance in Written Composition." They are intended to supplement the text, Warriner's English Grammar and Composition, Grade 10, and the curriculum guide, Resource Guidebook for the Language Arts Program of Pinellas County. It is hoped that teachers will find helpful these suggestions as to content, teaching procedures, topics for compositions, and evaluation of compositions. As the study progresses, it may be necessary to add supplementary materials.

In order to avoid stifling teacher initiative and originality in motivating students, the researcher suggests that writing activities be planned by the teacher within the framework of the study. Teachers may feel free to use these suggestions with any one of the classes involved in the study, provided each class follows the procedure for frequency of writing and intensity of evaluation as prescribed by the study. Teachers will find specific helps in planning compositions for frequent writing and in handling the paper load. A brief description of the research study is contained in the portfolio.

WRITTEN COMPOSITION

I. Introduction

At the beginning of the year, tenth grade students should be able to write at least one-paragraph compositions which give evidence of progress toward mechanical accuracy and mature thinking. Worthy of consideration are such criteria for good composition listed in "A Scale for Evaluation of High School Student Essays," (NCTE). It must be remembered that most of these criteria are designed for the senior level in high school, and tenth graders may seem to fall far short of these goals.

II. General Aim for the Tenth Grade

To develop further the ability to write clear, concise, and effective sentences and to incorporate these into complete paragraphs.

III. Specific Aims

A. To help the student develop an awareness of the skills needed in written communication

B. To improve the student's ability to communicate his thoughts and experiences through careful organization of materials and logical arrangement of ideas

C. To assist the student in finding more effective means of expression through increasing his understanding of the structure of the English language and through broadening his knowledge of words

D. To improve the student's skill in handling the mechanics of written communication

IV. Content

A. Review of the sentence and paragraph

B. Elimination of sentence fragments

C. Study of the paragraph

D. Development of a composition from two or three level outline

E. Experience in various types of writing

1. Description
2. Exposition
3. Creative writing

SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHING WRITTEN COMPOSITION

The following activities are suggested for use with the frequent-writing groups. Certain of these may, of course, be adopted as longer compositions for assignment to the in-frequent writing groups.

1. Use pictures, such as those found on the covers of the Saturday Evening Post, in stimulating the writing of sentences.

2. Have pupils observe and record in two or three sentences such topics as:
   a. Observations on the Way to School
   b. My Favorite Room
   c. People in the Halls

3. Write humorous or dramatic sentences and challenge the pupil to make similar attempts.

4. When pupils relate personal experiences, have them practice forming topic sentences which indicate exactly what experience is to be recounted, give the time and place, and signify the importance of the experience.

5. Encourage pupils to exercise the imagination in composing opening sentences that will suggest the import of the rest of the paragraph or in writing clinching sentences that will leave the intended impression.

6. Have the student keep a composition notebook or folder in which he writes five to ten minutes each class period on subjects of his choice or on topics suggested by the teacher. Have him date his writing and keep an error chart in the front to record kinds of errors made. Grade when convenient, checking only certain portions.

7. Have pupils describe in one or two sentences one of the following emotions: hate, love, fear, greed, anger, loneliness, happiness, jealousy, Pupils might be limited to two or three minutes of writing.

8. Clip cartoons or pictures from magazines or newspapers. Have each student write an appropriate original caption for picture.

9. Have each student staple or paste on notebook paper an editorial he has clipped from a newspaper and write a sentence or two of summary or reaction.

10. Let students analyze editorial cartoons and state briefly in sentences what the cartoons actually portray.

11. Encourage each student to write to a television personality expressing opinions of that person's program. It may be timely for all to write letters concerning some program under discussion.

12. Help students learn to write interesting postcards instead of the usual "Wish you were here."

13. Play on record or tape a selection not familiar to students. Play it through once for all to hear. Play the selection through the second and third times while students write their criticism (pro or con) of the music, their thoughts while listening, or a story suggested by the music.

14. Have students write their own endings to stories which they feel do not conclude satisfactorily.

15. Encourage students to retell stories from the point of view of one of the characters.

16. Have students write criticisms of the textbook currently being used.

17. When students express opinions on national or state issues, encourage them to write and mail letters to congressmen and legislators.

18. Have students describe themselves as they hope to be at 20, 40, 60, or 80.

19. Allow students to write imaginary views of the world as seen by a fly, a mockingbird, a school clock, a wastebasket, etc.

20. Enlist the aid of students to help in staging a scene which is out of the ordinary. Have students write details of what they have witnessed.

21. Secure student interest in preparing a class folder or anthology for which each student chooses one of his compositions to be included.

22. Encourage students to write original definitions of common objects: a watch, a pencil, a calendar, a can opener, etc.

23. Have students describe scenes or objects which would be completely foreign to someone in another part of the world.

24. Motivate students to write compositions relative to literature units.

25. Use actual situations to stimulate writing of letters
    - a. Thank-you letters after Christmas
    - b. Appreciation letters to parents
    - c. Congratulations for school achievements
    - d. Description of new hobbies or activities
    - e. Letters of application
    - f. Letters of order or inquiry

26. Help students learn literary criticism through book review of two or three paragraphs.
    - a. Classification of book
    - b. Significance of title
    - c. Information about author
    - d. Some special thesis or underlying view of life
    - e. Most important incidents and reasons for importance
    - f. Struggles of protagonists
    - g. Setting
    - h. Distinguishing features of book
    - i. Knowledge gained or understanding of life deepened

SUGGESTED TITLES FOR COMPOSITIONS
(ONE OR MORE PARAGRAPHS)

1. A Rainy Sunday
2. A Pleasant Afternoon
3. Buying New Clothes
4. Housecleaning Time
5. Getting Ready for a Dance
6. How I Know (Spring, Summer) Is on Its Way
7. Christmas Shopping
8. Trip to the Mountains
9. The One Thing I Would Save in a Fire
10. Restaurant Tips
11. Returning a Lost Article
12. Nuisances
13. My Idea of a Real Friend
14. Dreams Can Come True
15. This Is a Man's (Woman's) World
16. Never Again!
17. Why Do These Things Always Happen to Me!
18. Just My Tough Luck!
19. I'll Never Give Up!
20. I'll Never Hear the End of It!
21. I Keep Wondering
22. And They Blamed Me!
23. Thank Heavens, That's Over!
24. Where Do We Go from Here?
25. And Then the Fun Began

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THE EVALUATION OF ESSAYS[1]

I. Content: Is the conception clear, accurate, and complete?

  A. Does the student discuss the subject intelligently?
    1. Does he seem to have an adequate knowledge of his subject?
    2. Does he avoid errors in logic?
  B. Does the essay offer evidence in support of generalization?

II. Organization: Is the method of presentation clear, effective, and interesting?

  A. Is it possible to state clearly the central idea of the essay?
  B. Is the central idea of the paper as a whole sufficiently developed through the use of details and examples?
  C. Are the individual paragraphs sufficiently developed?
  D. Are all the ideas of the essay relevant?
  E. Are the ideas developed in logical order?
    1. Are the paragraphs placed in natural and logical sequence within the whole?
    2. Are the sentences placed in natural and logical sequence within the paragraphs?
  F. Are the transitions adequate?
  G. Are ideas given the emphasis required by their importance?
  H. Is the point of view consistent and appropriate?

III. Style and Mechanics: Does the essay observe standards of style and mechanics generally accepted by educated writers?

  A. Are the sentences clear, idiomatic, and grammatically correct? (For example, are they reasonably free of fragments, run-on sentences, comma splices, faulty parallel structure, mixed constructions, dangling modifiers, and errors of agreement, case, and verb forms?)
  B. Is the sentence structure effective?
    1. Is there appropriate variety in sentence structure?
    2. Are uses of subordination and coordination appropriate?
  C. Is conventional punctuation followed?
  D. Is the spelling generally correct?
  E. Is the vocabulary accurate, judicious, and sufficiently varied?

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[1] California Association of Teachers of English, A Scale for Evaluation of High School Student Essays (Champaign, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1960). p. 13.

APPENDIX C

DAT VERBAL ABILITY RAW SCORE RANGES

TABLE 8

DAT VERBAL ABILITY RAW SCORE RANGES

		L_1	L_2	L_3
E_1	W_1	5 - 19	20 - 25	26 - 36
	W_2	10 - 19	20 - 25	26 - 39
E_2	W_1	7 - 19	20 - 25	26 - 38
	W_2	11 - 19	20 - 25	26 - 38

APPENDIX D

IBM CARD FORMATS

IBM CARD LAYOUT FORM

STEP ESSAY TESTS

1		41
2	Student Code Number	42
3		43
4		44
5		45
6		46
7		47
8		48
9		49
10		50
11	Rater #1 - Pretest Raw Score	51
12		52
13	Rater #2 - Pretest Raw Score	53
14		54
15	Rater #3 - Pretest Raw Score	55
16		56
17		57
18		58
19	Pretest Mean Converted Score	59
20		60
21		61
22		62
23		63
24	Rater #1 - Posttest Raw Score	64
25		65
26	Rater #2 - Posttest Raw Score	66
27		67
28	Rater #3 - Posttest Raw Score	68
29		69
30		70
31		71
32	Posttest Mean Converted Score	72
33		73
34		74
35		75
36		76
37		77
38	Difference	78
39		79
40		80

IBM CARD LAYOUT FORM

COVARIATES AND TEST DIFFERENCES

1		41
2	School	42
3		43
4		44
5		45
6	Sex	46
7		47
8		48
9		49
10	Essay Test Difference	50
11		51
12		52
13		53
14	Writing Test Difference	54
15		55
16		56
17		57
18		58
19		59
20		60
21		61
22		62
23		63
24		64
25		65
26		66
27		67
28		68
29		69
30		70
31		71
32		72
33		73
34		74
35		75
36		76
37		77
38		78
39		79
40		80

APPENDIX E

QUESTIONNAIRE AND TABULATION

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Have you been aware this year of any difference in the way your teacher has taught you written composition as compared to previous years?

YES ____________

COMMENT BRIEFLY: NO ____________

Thinking of how you have been taught written composition in previous years or of how your friends in other teachers' classes have been taught written composition, please check the appropriate position on each of the scales. Place a check mark (x) at any suitable place on the line.

2. What is your opinion of the amount of writing you have done in your English class this year?

Too much | Just right | Not enough

3. Compared with last year, how much writing did you do this year?

Much more | About the same | Much less

4. Of how much value do you feel your teacher's checking your paper has been to you in learning to write more effectively?

Great value | Some value | Very little value

5. To what degree do you feel your writing has improved this year?

Greatly | Considerably | Some | Very little | Not at all

5/22/62
/jm

TABLE 9

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSE

1. Have you been aware this year of any difference in the way your teacher has taught you written composition as compared to previous years?

		School A		School B	
		Yes	No	Yes	No
E_1	W_1	19	2	13	6
	W_2	24	2	13	10
E_2	W_1	22	1	10	13
	W_2	19	1	8	20

TABLE 10

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSE

2. What is your opinion of the amount of writing you have done in your English class this year?

		School A					School B				
		Scale Points					Scale Points				
		5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
E_1	W_1	1	3	10	4	2	1	3	14	1	0
	W_2	4	5	15	3	0	0	1	13	4	5
E_2	W_1	1	2	10	5	5	1	6	8	6	2
	W_2	0	5	8	1	5	1	4	14	10	1

TABLE 11

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSE

3. Compared with last year, how much writing did you do this year?

		School A					School B				
		Scale Points					Scale Points				
		5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
E_1	W_1	6	3	8	1	3	8	5	3	3	0
	W_2	22	2	2	0	2	2	2	10	5	4
E_2	W_1	8	6	4	1	4	4	4	9	4	3
	W_2	15	1	0	0	2	7	8	9	5	1

TABLE 12

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSE

4. Of how much value do you feel your teacher's checking your paper has been to you in learning to write more effectively?

		School A					School B				
		Scale Points					Scale Points				
		5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
E_1	W_1	8	5	7	0	1	6	6	4	2	1
	W_2	11	5	7	2	3	6	10	6	0	1
E_2	W_1	14	4	3	0	2	3	9	7	1	3
	W_2	10	2	5	2	0	10	11	7	1	1

TABLE 13

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSE

5. To what degree do you feel your writing has improved this year?

		School A					School B				
		Scale Points					Scale Points				
		5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
E_1	W_1	2	12	5	2	0	0	8	9	2	0
	W_2	5	17	3	3	0	1	12	8	2	0
E_2	W_1	3	10	6	4	0	1	5	10	6	1
	W_2	3	9	6	1	0	2	17	8	4	0

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